

Radio Logan Inc  
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The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Communications Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

12<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Dear Sir / Madam –

I have been asked to submit to the inquiry into the adequacy of radio services in regional and rural Australia, the following on behalf of Radio Logan Inc., 4CBL – 101 F.M.

101 F.M. is situated in Logan City Queensland, and has been full time on air for the past 12 years.

Logan City is the third largest City in Queensland and has a population of approximately 175,000.

- *The social benefits and influence on the general public of radio broadcasting in non-metropolitan Australia in comparison to other media sectors:*

Often this is the only form of entertainment/information the people in regional and rural Australia receive.

In rural areas particularly, community radio is one of a very few options available with regards to the presentation and dissemination of local content.

For those sight impaired, radio is an excellent source of information.

This may be the only link the population has with the ‘outside’ world.

The commercial sector are networking a large percentage of their programs – which leaves out the local content – the only information you get is relevant to the network provider. Also because they pre-record a majority of programs the ‘immediacy’ of radio is lost in-so-much that they are unable to report to air any major happenings (e.g. a road closure or problem with traffic on a specific road, or perhaps a possum falling into the towns water supply).

This is where community radio comes to the fore being able to bring local occurrence directly to the communities attention. If the commercial sector is to continue along these lines, more support will be needed to be given to community radio to enable them to keep supplying local content.

When a number of commercial stations receive the same networked program, it means the one perspective is being broadcast to a number of stations around the country, which could lead to a bias

view. Stations supplying a networked program would need to be mindful of presenting a variety of views or perspectives.

- *Future trends in radio broadcasting, including employment and career opportunities, in non-metropolitan Australia.*

Because of the extent commercial stations network their programs from primarily one source, and also pre-record their on-air programs, this effectively reduces the need for a large staff of presenters – which for the Station may be an economic viability, however, for potential broadcasters this is a disaster because it reduces the employment field.

However, for some community radio stations, networking may be the only way they can present on-air program – they may not have a large volunteer staff of on-air presenters. As their membership grows they then have the opportunity to reduce the number of hours of networked program to fill with local content.

Community radio offers the listener a broader spectrum of issues.

Around 15-20 years ago, potential ‘disc jockeys’ did their training out west in places like Longreach, then they came back to the City to go on air. Community Radio is a valuable training ground for potential broadcasters – whether in News or general presentation and in many cases provides the training required by the commercial sector.

- *The effect on individuals, families and small businesses in non-metropolitan Australia of networking of radio programming, particularly in relation to local news services, sport, community service announcements and other forms of local content:*

Dependent on the type of programs, which are being networked, this could have one of two effects:

If all radio programs such as news, sport, community service announcements etc. come from outside the area, the individual is losing out on the very important component of ‘local’ issues and information. This will also effect the local businessperson that is restricted from promoting their goods and services to the people of the local area.

However, if through these networked programs there is an opportunity to provide information on issues and services which are not available to the individual in that specific community, this could be a bonus.

It would depend on the type of programs being taken.

- *The potential for new technologies such as digital radio to provide enhanced and more localized radio services in metropolitan, regional and rural areas:*

One advantage is that it enables the individual to stay tuned to their favorite radio station, despite where they travel within Australia.

The off air sound will be clearer and crisper.

Concern however that the introduction of Digital radio would mean the abolition of the current 88-108 F.M. band on which a lot of community as well as commercial stations are located.

What would happen to community stations on the A.M. band?

There are limitations to the Digital Spectrum – once again the ‘band’ is restricted.

The cost to rural commercial stations, not alone community stations will be unaffordable – hence the potential to have a number of stations (particularly those in rural areas) shut down.

By taking a ‘commercial’ news service the networked station loses out on local news issues.

I thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and look forward to the hearing next Monday 3.15 to 4 p.m. at Logan City Council Chambers.

Yours sincerely

**LEA BUDGE**

Station Manager 101 F.M.